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which involve only the use of such techniques do not require an environmental assessment. However, any such guidelines must be submitted to the Chairman for approval.

(d) In some cases within the categories listed in paragraph (b) of this section, it will be evident at the outset or after the assessment process is begun that an EIS should be prepared. In such cases an assessment need not be completed, but the process of preparing an EIS (See § 640.5, of this part) should be started.

§ 640.4 Responsibilities and procedures for preparation of an environmental assessment.

(a) Program Officers, as the first point of decision in the review process, shall determine into which category incoming proposals fall, according to the criteria set forth in § 640.3 of this part. Notwithstanding this responsibility of the Program Officer, the appropriate Division Director, Assistant Director, and other reviewing policy officials must assure that adequate analysis is being made.

(b) Where appropriate, programs, divisions, or directorates will advise prospective applicants in program announcements, requests for proposals, and other NSF-prepared brochures of the requirement to furnish information regarding any environmental impact that the applicant's proposed study may have.

(c) Should an environmental assessment be required, the directorate supporting the activity shall be responsible for its preparation. The grant or contract applicant may be asked to submit additional information in order that a reasonable and accurate assessment may be made. Though no specific format for an environmental assessment is prescribed, it shall be a separate document suitable for public review and shall serve the purpose described in 40 CFR 1508.9, which is quoted in full as follows:

Section 1508.9 Environmental Assessment

“Environmental Assessment”:

(a) Means a concise public document for which a Federal agency is responsible that serves to:

(1) Briefly provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare

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an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact.

(2) Aid an agency's compliance with the Act when no environmental impact statement is necessary.

(3) Facilitate preparation of a statement when one is necessary.

(b) Shall include brief discussions of the need for the proposal, of alternatives as required by section 102(2)(E), of the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives, and a listing of agencies and persons consulted.

(d) A copy of the assessment or drafts shall accompany the appropriate proposal throughout the NSF internal review and approval process. At the option of the directorate preparing the assessment, a draft may be submitted to the Committee for its review and comments. Prior to an award decision, one copy of all completed assessments shall be sent to the Chairman for review and updating of the Committee listing of assessments.

(e) If, on the basis of an environmental assessment, it is determined that an EIS is not required, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) as described in 40 CFR 1508.13 will be prepared. The FNSI shall include the environmental assessment or a summary of it and be available to the public from the Committee. If the proposed action is one that normally requires an EIS, is closely similar to an action normally requiring an EIS, or is without precedent, the FNSI shall be made available for a 30 day public review period before any action is taken.

§ 640.5 Responsibilities and procedures for preparation of an environmental impact statement.

(a) If initially or after an environmental assessment has been completed, it is determined that an environmental impact statement should be prepared, it and other related documentation will be prepared by the directorate responsible for the action in accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the Act, this part, and the CEQ regulations. The responsible directorate will be in close communication with the grant or contract applicant and may have to rely extensively on his or her input in preparing the EIS. However, once a document is prepared it shall be submitted to the Chairman who, after such review

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by the Committee as is deemed necessary by the Chairman, shall transmit the document as required by CEQ regulations and this part. If the Chairman considers a document unsatisfactory, he or she shall return it to the responsible directorate for revision prior to an award decision.

Specifically, the following steps, as discussed in the CEQ regulations, will be followed in preparing an EIS:

(1) A notice of intent to prepare a draft EIS will be published as described in 40 CFR 1501.7.

(2) Scoping, as described in 40 CFR 1501.7, will be conducted.

(3) The format and contents of the draft and final EIS shall be as discussed in 40 CFR part 1502.

(4) Comments on the draft EIS shall be invited as set forth in 40 CFR 1503.1. The minimum period to be afforded for comments on a draft EIS shall be 45 days, unless a lesser period is necessary to comply with other specific statutory requirements or in case of emergency circumstances, as described in 40 CFR 1506.11.

(5) The requirements of 40 CFR 1506.9 for filing of documents with the Environmental Protection Agency shall be followed.

(6) The responsible directorate shall examine carefully the basis on which supportive studies have been conducted to assure that such studies are objective and comprehensive in scope and in depth.

(7) The Act requires that the decisionmaking involved “utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach that will insure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts.” If such disciplines are not present on the NSF staff, appropriate use should be made of personnel of Federal, State, and local agencies, universities, non-profit organizations, or private industry.

(8) A copy of the draft EIS or the final EIS (or a summary, if the size of the EIS does not make this practical) shall be included in and accompany the appropriate proposal throughout the NSF internal review and approval process.

(b)(1) 40 CFR 1506.1 describes the types of actions that should not be taken during the NEPA process. Such

actions shall be avoided by NSF personnel during the process of preparation of an EIS and for a period of thirty days after the final EIS is filed with EPA, unless such actions are necessary to comply with other specific statutory requirements.

(2) 40 CFR 1506.10 also places certain limitations on the timing of agency decisions on taking “major Federal actions”. In some cases the actual “decision point” may be more clear-cut than others. If the “action” that necessitated the preparation of an EIS is one that would be carried out under grant, contract, or cooperative agreement, then the award shall not be made before the times set forth in 40 CFR 1506.10, unless such action is necessary to comply with other specific statutory requirements, or as exceptions are needed as provided in 40 CFR 1506.10, 1506.11, or 1507.3. However, an award for preliminary planning proposals may be made before such times if it is so structured as to require further NSF approvals for funding the actual actions that might adversely affect the quality of the human environment. In such cases, the subsequent approvals for funding these actions will be considered the “decision”. This is consistent with the requirement that environmental considerations undergo concurrent review with all other project planning considerations.

(c) In appropriate cases, if the action involves other agencies, the Chairman may agree to designate another agency as “lead agency” and to cooperate as discussed in 40 CFR 1501.5 and 1501.6. In such cases, the Chairman has authority to alter the procedures described in (a) to the extent they are inconsistent with functions assigned to NSF under the “cooperating agency” arrangements.

(d) A public record of decision stating what the decision was; identifying alternatives that were considered, including the environmentally preferable one(s); discussing any national policy considerations that entered into the decision; and summarizing a monitoring and enforcement program if applicable for mitigation, will be prepared. This record of decision will be prepared at the time the decision is

made, or if appropriate, when the agency makes its recommendation for action to Congress. (See 40 CFR 1505.2.)

PART 641—ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES FOR PROPOSED NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION ACTIONS IN ANTARCTICA

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AUTHORITY: E.O. 12114, 44 FR 1957, 3 CFR 1979 Comp., p. 356.

SOURCE: 57 FR 40339, Sept. 3, 1992, unless otherwise noted.

§ 641.10 Purpose.

These procedures are designed to elicit and evaluate information that will inform the National Science Foundation (NSF) of the potential environmental consequences of proposed U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP) actions, so that relevant environmental considerations are taken into account by decisionmakers before reaching final decisions on whether or how to proceed with proposed actions. These procedures are consistent with and implement the requirements of:

- (a) Executive Order 12114 as it relates to NSF's Antarctic activities, and
- (b) the environmental assessment provisions of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.

§ 641.11 Policy.

It is the policy of NSF to use all practicable means, consistent with its authority, to ensure that potential environmental effects of actions under-

taken by NSF in Antarctica, either independently or in cooperation with another country, are appropriately identified and considered during the decisionmaking process, and that appropriate environmental safeguards which would limit, mitigate or prevent adverse impacts on the Antarctic environment are identified.

§ 641.12 Applicability.

The requirements set forth in this part apply to all proposed projects, programs and actions authorized or approved by, or subject to the control and responsibility of NSF that may have an impact on the Antarctic environment.

§ 641.13 Right of action

The procedures set forth in this part establish internal procedures to be followed by NSF in considering the potential environmental effects of actions taken in Antarctica. Nothing in this part shall be construed to create a cause of action.

§ 641.14 Definitions.

As used in these procedures, the term:

(a) *Action* means a project, program or other activity, including the adoption of an official policy or formal plan, that is undertaken, authorized, adopted or approved by, or subject to the control or responsibility of NSF, the decommissioning of a physical plant or facility, and any change in the scope or intensity of a project, program or action.

(b) *Antarctica* means the area south of 60 degrees south latitude.

(c) *Antarctic environment* means the natural and physical environment of Antarctica and its dependent and associated ecosystems, but excludes social, economic and other environments.

(d) *Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting* means a meeting of the Parties to the Antarctic Treaty, held pursuant to Article IX(1) of the Treaty.

(e) *Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation* or *CEE* means a study of the reasonably foreseeable potential effects of a proposed action on the antarctic environment, prepared in accordance with the provisions of § 641.18, and includes all comments thereon received during the comment period described